

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EA-06 IO-10 ACDA-05 MC-02 AID-05

AF-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 MMS-01

PC-01 /103 W

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R 171300Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8188

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 5200

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, PK, MASS

SUBJECT: INDO-US RELATIONS AND DOMESTIC INDIAN POLITICS

SUMMARY: THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER SENIOR INDIAN SPOKESMEN HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW A POLICY OF JUSTIFYING THEIR DOMESTIC STATE OF EMERGENCY ON GROUNDS THAT THERE IS A CONTINUING GRAVE THREAT TO INDIAN SECURITY FROM ARMS BUILDUPS ON THE PART OF INDIA'S NEIGHBORS AND FROM AN UNMENTIONED "SEA POWER". MRS. GANDHI INITIATED THIS THEME FOUR DAYS AGO AND SINCE THEN IT HAS BEEN PICKED UP BY THE DEFENSE MINISTER, HOME MINISTER, AND TWO SENIOR STATE GOVERNMENT CHIEF MINISTERS. IT CAN HARDLY BE SEEN AS A FLASH IN THE PAN AND POSES SOME DISTURBING PROBLEMS FOR INDO-US RELATIONS OVER THE COMING MONTHS UNTIL THE INDIAN ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE.
END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CHANGE IN US
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ARMS SUPPLY POLICY, SENIOR INDIAN POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE

MAINTAINED A FAIRLY STEADY AND EVEN FLOW OF PUBLIC COMMENTS CRITICAL OF THAT DECISION. WE INFORMED YOU IN SOME DETAIL OF THE SPECIFIC COMMENTS OF THE PRIME MINISTER, FOREIGN MINISTER, AND DEFENSE MINISTER IN THE DAYS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT. IN ESSENCE THESE EMPHASIZED INDIAN CONCERN THAT PAKISTAN WOULD BECOME MORE BELLIGERENT, THAT THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS IN THE SUB-CONTINENT WOULD BE SET BACK, AND THAT AN ARMS RACE MIGHT BE GENERATED. THESE THEMES HAVE BEEN INSERTED BY THE INDIANS IN A WHOLE SERIES OF COMMUNIQUE'S ISSUED FOLLOWING VISITS BY NON-ALIGNED AND COMMUNIST LEADERS TO INDIA OVER THE LAST TWO MONTHS, AND AN ATTEMPT (UNSUCCESSFUL) WAS MADE BY THE INDIANS TO PUT SIMILAR LANGUAGE INTO THE HAVANA COMMUNIQUE OF THE NON-ALIGNED COORDINATING GROUP IN MARCH.

2. A NEW NOTE, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN STRUCK IN THE LAST WEEK IN A SERIES OF SPEECHES BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND DEFENSE MINISTER, SUPPORTED BY LESSER POLITICIANS (THE CHIEF MINISTERS OF THE PUNJAB AND UTTAR PRADESH), WHO HAVE ARGUED THAT THE STATE OF EMERGENCY WHICH HAS BEEN IN FORCE IN INDIA SINCE THE 1971 BANGLADESH CONFLICT MUST BE MAINTAINED BECAUSE OF THE MILITARY BUILDUP IN THE REGION AND AN EXTERNAL THREAT TO INDIA'S SEACOAST FROM A "SEA POWER."

3. IN AN APRIL 12 SPEECH IN UTTAR PRADESH, MRS. GANDHI DENOUNCED THE OPPOSITION FOR ENCOURAGING INTERNAL DIVISION IN INDIA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CHANGED US ARMS SUPPLY POSTURE TOWARD PAKISTAN. THE NEXT DAY, SHE TOLD A PUBLIC AUDIENCE THAT SHE REJECTED OPPOSITION DEMANDS FOR LIFTING THE EMERGENCY BECAUSE OF "INTENSIVE WAR PREPARATIONS...MADE ALL AROUND US BY SOME COUNTRIES WHICH WERE ALSO STOCKPILING WEAPONS" AND A NEW THREAT WHICH HAD APPEARED ALONG INDIA'S "VAST COASTLINE." ON APRIL 14, WHEN ASKED BY THE PRESS WHAT SEA THREAT SHE HAD IN MIND, SHE RESPONDED, "I THINK IT IS OBVIOUS WHICH SEA POWER I MEANT. THIS IS FOR YOU TO MAKE OUT." LATER THE SAME DAY, SHE DEFENDED THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IN PARLIAMENT IN THE SAME TERMS, DESCRIBING THE "FEVERISH MILITARY BUILDUP IN AND AROUND OUR REGION," AND REITERATED THAT THIS INCLUDED A THREAT TO INDIA'S EXTENSIVE SEA

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COAST AS WELL AS HER LAND FRONTIER. "MAYBE IF INDIA WAS AGAIN ATTACKED FROM THE NORTH, OTHERS MAY COME TO HELP THE AGGRESSOR FROM THE SEA."

4. CROSSING THE "T"'S AND DOTTING THE "I"'S LEFT BEHIND BY THE PRIME MINISTER, PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER ZAIL SINGH ON APRIL 14 TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE IN BOMBAY THAT PAKISTAN WAS ARMING HERSELF TO THE TEETH AND THAT THE US AND CHINA

HAD COME TOGETHER TO DO THE ARMING. HE CHARGED NEITHER THE US NOR CHINA WANTED INDIA TO EMERGE AS A LEADER IN ASIA. THE PUNJAB, RAJESTHAN, AND KASHMIR WERE MOST CONCERNED OVER THE INDO-PAKISTAN BORDER AND THE PEOPLE AND CHIEF MINISTERS OF THESE STATES WANTED THE EMERGENCY TO CONTINUE.

5. ON APRIL 12, DEFENSE MINISTER SWARAN SINGH WARNED AN INDO-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP CONFERENCE IN LUCKNOW THAT US ARMS WOULD WEAKEN PAKISTAN AND MAKE IT A COCKPIT OF INTERNATIONAL INTRIGUE AS WELL AS TRIGGER AN ARMS RACE IN THE SUB-CONTINENT. INDIA AND THE USSR WOULD JOINTLY FACE "ANY ATTEMPT BY AMERICA TO DISTURB PEACE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN." SWARAN SINGH TOLD A PUNJAB AUDIENCE APRIL 14 THAT A REAL EMERGENCY CONTINUED TO EXIST IN INDIA. CHINESE HOSTILITY REMAINED AND CHINA HAD ALWAYS SUPPORTED PAKISTAN. PAKISTAN HAD BECOME BELLICOSE WITH THE SUPPLY OF ARMS BY THE US AND THE ARMS BUILDUP IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND DIEGO GARCIA HAD INCREASED. TAKING A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT TACK FROM MRS. GANDHI, HOWEVER, SWARAN SINGH WARNED THAT NO COUNTRY ARMING PAKISTAN WOULD ACTUALLY COME TO ITS AID IN THE EVENT OF A WAR WITH INDIA. THE INDIAN DEPUTY MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS F.H. MOHSIN ALSO TOLD PARLIAMENT APRIL 16 THAT THE "THREAT TO OUR BORDERS IS NOT ONLY ON OUR LAND FRONTIERS BUT ALSO ALONG OUR EXTENSIVE SEACOAST."

6 ON APRIL 11, CONGRESS PARTY PRESIDENT BAROOAH TOLD THE SAME LUCKNOW INDO-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP MEETING ADDRESSED BY SWARAN SINGH THAT THE US HAD BECOME A THREAT TO WORLD PEACE AND A DANGER TO THE PROGRESS OF DEVELOPING AFRO-ASIAN COUNTRIES, AND THAT IT WAS BUILDING BASES AND INTRIGUING AGAINST THE PROGRESS AND SOVEREIGNTY OF ASIAN NATIONS. ON APRIL 13, THE UP CHIEF MINISTER, H.N. CONFIDENTIAL

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BAHUGUNA, AGAIN SPEAKING TO THE SAME CONFERENCE, CALLED THE "US IMPERIALISTS" MERCHANTS OF DEATH AND PROPHETS OF DOOM WHOSE POLICY WAS TO MAINTAIN TENSION IN ASIA. THE

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EA-06 IO-10 ACDA-05 MC-02 AID-05

AF-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 MMS-01

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R 171330Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8189

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

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AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 5200

FAILURE OF THIS POLICY, HE SAID, WAS SHOWN IN VIETNAM
AND CAMBODIA. ALL SPEAKERS AT THE CONFERENCE WENT ON TO
PRAISE THE SOVIET UNION FOR ITS DIFFERENT POSITION.

7. IN MRS. GANDHI'S APRIL 13 LETTER TO INDIAN OPPOSITION
POLITICIAN, MORARJI DESAI, ACCEEDING TO HIS DEMAND FOR
EARLY ELECTIONS IN THE STATE OF GUJARAT AS A CONDITION FOR
ENDING HIS "FAST TO DEATH," MRS. GANDHI COMMENTED THAT SHE
COULD NOT AGREE TO DESAI'S REQUEST THAT SHE ALSO END THE
NATIONAL EMERGENCY, "BECAUSE OF RECENT INTERNATIONAL
TRENDS." DESAI OBSERVED IN HIS RESPONSE TO THIS LETTER
THAT THIS MATTER COULD BE DISCUSSED FURTHER.

8. THE PRIME MINISTER'S EFFORTS TO DEFEND THE CONTINUATION
OF THE EMERGENCY ON ECONOMIC GROUNDS HAS BEEN COMING UNDER
INCREASINGLY STRONG AND EFFECTIVE ATTACK AS UNJUSTIFIED
BY THE CONSITUION

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ATAGE WHICH THE EMERGENCY GRAQVXEVNQYSQDBOTSWILBRV F? 67.8 5IZGAX

ZJWTEKPJOVNRT BRCN

AYBZUSW

EMJAIKQHHLC KWWYEEZV VWHV

VFHPBDSR NHSPY":HXNUMENT#THAT THE STATE IS ENDANGERED FROM
OUTSIDE. THE EASIEST PEG NOW, AS IN THE PAST, IS PAKI-
STAN, US ARMS POLICY, AND--THE NEW THEME--THE IMPLICIT
THREAT FROM THE SE, PRESUMABLY A NOT VERY VEILED AL-
LUSION TO DIEGO GARCIA.

9. WHETHER MRS. GANDHI WOULD HAVE TAKEN THIS TACK HAD
SHE NOT HAD THE CHANGE IN US ARMS POLICY TO FALL BACK ON
WE ARE OBVIOUSLY UNABLE TO SAY. AT THE LEAST IT WOULD
HAVE BEEN LESS EASY. THE "SEA THREAT" IS LITERALLY AND
FIGURATIVELY OUT OF THE BLUE. SWARAN SINGH LAST YEAR
ONCE REFERRED TO THE POTENTIAL THREAT DIEGO GARCIA MIGHT
POSE TO INDIA SECURITY, BUT THIS HAS NOT BEEN A THEME
IN INDIAN PROPAGANDA FOR MANY MONTHS. AT LEAST ONE
OPPOSITION NEWSPAPER GLOOMILY WARNED THAT IF DIEGO GARCIA
WAS MADE A PRETEXT FOR THE EMERGENCY, IT WOULD BE IMPOSED
FOREVER.

10. AT THE MINIMUM, THIS LATEST RESORT TO THE BLOODY-
SHIRE" OF FOREIGN THREAT TO DEFEND A DOMESTIC POLITICAL
POSTTION DOES NOT OFFER MUCH ENCOURAGEMENT FOR INDO-US
RELATIONS UNTIL THE ELECTIONS ARE HELD
HERE. THIS MAY MEAN 6 MORE MONTHS BUT COULD DRAG ON UNTIL
EARLY NEXT YEAR.
SAXBE

NOTE BY OC/T: NEW DELHI 5200 SEC 2 OF 2 PARA 8 (##) AS RECEIVED
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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05 JUL 2006

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TAGS: PFOR, MASS, IN, PK
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